

## CLAIMS

1. An event scheduling apparatus for use in scheduling events on behalf of a plurality of participating physical entities, the apparatus comprising evaluating means and  
5 scheduling means, the evaluating means being arranged to evaluate a received event request comprising information about the event and to generate an input to the scheduling means with respect to one or more physical entities identified in the received event request, the evaluating means comprising determining means operable on behalf of at least one physical entity identified in the received event request, to:
- 10 a) determine a value for each of a plurality of predetermined measures, said measures including a measure of the importance of the requested event to said at least one physical entity, the value for each said measure being derived according to a rule set for the measure by combining information about the event with data obtained from at least one information source associated with said at least one physical entity; and
- 15 b) combine said determined values, according to a further rule set, to derive a value indicative of the overall degree of support by said at least one physical entity for the requested event, and to output said derived value for input to the scheduling means,  
wherein at least one of said values is defined by means of a fuzzy set, at least one of said rule sets comprise at least one fuzzy rule and wherein said determining means  
20 comprise at least one fuzzy logic processor.
2. An event scheduling apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein said determining means are implemented, in use, as a plurality of participant software agents, each participant software agent being operable on behalf of at least one physical entity identified in the  
25 received event request.
3. An event scheduling apparatus as in Claim 2, wherein the evaluating means further comprise a proposer software agent operable to receive an event request and, for one or more physical entities identified therein, to:
- 30 i) determine a value for a measure of the importance of the identified physical entity to the requested event, each said value being derived according to a rule set for said measure by combining information about the event with data obtained from at least one information source associated with the identified physical entity; and

ii) generate an event proposal comprising the importance value from i) together with information about the event, for sending to the respective participant software agent for the identified physical entity.

5 4. An event scheduling apparatus as in Claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein said rule sets are personalised to respective physical entities.

5. An event scheduling apparatus as in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the evaluating means further comprise adjusting means arranged to receive feedback by,  
10 or on behalf of, a physical entity in relation to an output by the scheduling means corresponding to a received event request in which said physical entity is identified, and to make adjustments to fuzzy sets and/or fuzzy rules in accordance with said received feedback.

15 6. An event scheduling apparatus as in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the evaluating means and the scheduling means are implemented in a distributed manner.

7. An event scheduling apparatus substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

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8. A software agent operable in a computer processing arrangement on behalf of at least one physical entity to evaluate event requests received over a communications network and to output a value for use by an event scheduler indicative of the overall degree of support by said at least one physical entity for a respective requested event,  
25 wherein the software agent is responsive, on receipt of an event request comprising information about the event, to apply fuzzy logic processing techniques to combine information about the requested event with information obtained from a plurality of information sources associated with said at least one physical entity to determine a value for each of a plurality of predetermined measures, said measures including a measure of  
30 the importance of the requested event to said at least one physical entity, the value for at least one of said measures being defined by a fuzzy set and the value for at least one of said measures being derived according to a fuzzy rule for the measure, and to apply a further rule set comprising at least one fuzzy rule to combine said values of said measures to derive and output a value indicative of the overall degree of support by said at least one  
35 physical entity for the requested event for input to an event scheduler.

9. A software agent as in Claim 9, operable to receive an output by an event scheduler generated by the scheduler in respect of a requested event using a respective said value indicative of the overall degree of support by said at least one physical entity  
5 for the requested event and to adjust one of more fuzzy sets or fuzzy rules in respect of said at least one physical entity according to feedback received on behalf of said at least one physical entity in respect of said output by the event scheduler.